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6

Conclusion

311 184 In the comparative study of these villages, certain distinctions are worth summarizing. (1) In the southern villages, which lack forest land, there is much more dependence on the uncultivated wild land (genya) which supports the grasses. (2) The forest, in Matsuda as elsewhere in the north, is a reserve for necessities like firewood, thatch, charcoal and building materials, both for local use and southern trade. (3) The shelter belts and groves have been preserved in the north. [245] [647] (4) Tidewater plantings of shelter belts are needed in the south. Plantings of the Ryukyuan Forestry Agency, under American Civil Administration encouragement, have begun in the south as protection from wind and salt water spray damage. These include the mokumao, the pandanus, the hibiscus (Albizzia julibrissum Durass, in Japanese the nemunoki) and the hirugi (Bruguiera spp.)[12] (5) Ecologically, the situation is more balanced in the north where a good start seems to have been made in arresting progressive deforestation. (6) This balance, if Matsuda is a representative village, can only be maintained by constant appraisal of the relationships of the forest to agriculture, to the growing population, and to the economic demands to which this leads, unless the wood and timber demands of the island are to be met in large part by imports.

114 648 636 An occupying power like the United States, rich in modern techniques, can do much to improve the life of a small island people. If it is mindful of the history and the present features of the culture, it can suggest improvements without destroying the bases on which the culture rests.

313 114 One of its greatest accomplishments could be an aggressive and continuing program of conservation and afforestation. The present administration, through the Forestry Section of the Food and Natural Resources Department, has started a program which, if permanently pursued, could have far-reaching consequences. An emphasis on selective cutting, conservation, fire control, tidewater plantings, and many other measures could only be a credit to American administrators and foresters as well. The costs, as such things go, would be moderate.

From personal experience in village life, I have no doubt that the co-operation of villagers in all parts of the island could be readily obtained in advancing a large scale afforestation program. The readiness of the people of Matsuda cannot be an exception. These things could be accomplished without an unwieldy administrative apparatus. I have been continually struck with the ability of the Okinawans, with their skill in local organization, to accomplish

12 I am indebted to Mr. Richard Varney of the Department of Food and Natural Resources, USCAR, for this information.

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The native medicine, including the use of plants and fish as medicines, the native doctor, the use of cauterization, the golden needle, slashing, and acupuncture, seem to be disappearing in favor of modern patent medicines and drugs, and scientific medicine, nursing, and midwifery. Of all the traditional practices (ultimately derived from China), slashing and burning with moguza seem to have the greatest vitality.

10

Tattooing

Tattooing (ireizumi) in Japanese, dake in Okinawan) is a subject of great historical interest in the Ryukyu chain. In Okinawa, it exists now only among elderly women (in the late sixties and seventies), as it was forbidden by law when the Japanese annexed the islands. Tattooing usually was done on the back of the hands, including the fingers, parts of the wrist, and the knuckles. The design was put on by spreading India ink (often with sake or awamori added) on the surface, pricking out the design and wiping off the surplus, repeating the operation for the lighter parts. To my knowledge, there was no facial tattooing.

Until quite recently tattooing was practiced on men as well. Basil Hall in 1816 wrote of a landing in the south of Okinawa island. "Most of these people had fish spears tatooed on their arms in the form of a trident, with rude barbs." On the right arm it was called (in Hall's transcription) "oodeemaw," and on the left, "tooga." Apparently this was confined to fishermen. Furness in his account of the Luchus (1899) observed such markings among young and mature men in Itoman. The explanation given him was that they were a protection against evil spirits. Furness also discussed the theory that tattooing was historically connected with weaving. Simon, in an interesting speculative discussion, based on the designs of cloth in Miyako and their correspondence with house or family markings thought that the tattooing was a means of identifying woman's membership in a family.7

This interesting idea unfortunately did not occur to me while in the villages, but the notion that tattooing may have been related

7 Hall's Voyage, as cited, Vocabulary (no pagination). Hall includes sketches of the marks. Furness, Life in the Luchu islands, as cited, 9. See also Simon's extremely interesting discussion, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, as cited, 138-150. Furness and Simon are especially valuable because they personally observed instances of tattooing at a time when it was much more commonly seen. Both authors reproduce patterns which show differences among the islands and among individuals.

543 these matters. In township exhibits of arts and crafts, there are evidences of these skills, such as the training of a chrysanthemum, a favorite choice, but these are not part of daily life.

532 Yet there is evidence of artistic talent and interest which teachers and parents encourage in the young. Okinawan children draw [353] and copy well. It is not unusual to see an otherwise bare room of a poor farmer's home decorated with the paintings or drawings of a son or daughter. While clearly the work of novices, they often show feeling for line and color. School buildings, houses, and landscapes are the favorite subjects. Drawing skills come as no surprise because of the close relationship, in countries using the Chinese character, of calligraphy and art. Teachers of drawing and art in the schools 875 are skillful in rapid sketching, and part of this skill must be the re- 212 sult of early training in the sequence of strokes and in writing the Chinese character with confidence and boldness.

535 Dancing and samisen playing are learned by imitation and self-
533 instruction. Music is learned by ear, the dancing by observing the old
868 and skilled. Parents do not instruct their children in these arts;
they pick up the skill themselves. There are no village teachers nor
do the schools teach native dances, songs, or samisen playing. (In
[562] recent years instruction books have been furnished when a samisen is
purchased). Samisen playing is a monopoly of the men, many of whom also
have a repertoire of traditional dances. These performers are always
in demand on social occasions. Both old and young men dance, but only
the old women feel free to do so. Seeing a seventy or eighty year old
grandmother dancing at a party is commonplace, but I have never seen a
young girl or a young woman in her thirties doing this. (Young girls
and young women may participate in formal dances in processions and on
holidays). Among the younger people, there is considerable interest, but
little facility in American dancing.

532 Hanging scrolls (kakemono) are often purchased by the villagers.
But these are dashed off affairs, following Japanese art conventions,
such as the jolly Japanese patron saint, tigers, the bamboo-plum
blossom-cherry triad, and the turtle and the cormorant, etc.

181 One has the impression of latent talent in music, dancing, and
drawing but that the cultural conditions have not been favorable to
[533] their development. Social events and parties are unthinkable without
[535] singing, dancing, and samisen playing. Good drawing and calligraphy
[532] are admired. But none of these seem to be highly developed folk arts.
[868] Possibly one reason is that the transmission of the skills has been
purely imitative, and that a body of knowledge has not accumulated in
books, organized teaching, or through apprenticeship and hereditary
occupations by which ideas can be improved upon by wider dissemination.
[369] The cultural isolation of rural villages may have prevented the building
up of a tradition in art and handicraft. Naha and Shuri, the historical
cultural centers, have produced the fine examples of lacquer ware,
ceramics, and paintings. Possibly also Japanese repression of the native
[636] culture has been the main reason. Whatever they are, the lack of advance-